

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 00156 180641Z
ACTION EA-12

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9668
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONO HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0156

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: CH CB VN PBOR PEPR SOPH

SUBJ: MORE ON "REFERENCE NEWS" COVERAGE OF THE CAMBODIAN-
VIETNAMESE BORDER CONFLICT

REF: PEKING 142

1. SUMMARY: USLO HAS OBTAINED NINE EARLY JANUARY ISSUES
OF THE PRC'S RESTRICTED FOREIGN PRESS DIGEST, "REFERENCE
NEWS", WHICH PROVIDED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF THE CAMBODIAN-
VIETNAMESE BORDER CONFLICT. REPLAY OF FOREIGN PRESS RE-
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PAGE 02 PEKING 00156 180641Z

PORTS OF THE CONFLICT WERE CLEARLY SLANTED IN CAMBODIA'S
FAVOR WHILE ONLY MAKING PASSING MENTION OF THE VIETNAMESE
POSITION. FOREIGN PRESS REPORTS ALSO GAVE HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVE, COVERED FOREIGN REACTION TO THE CONFLICT,
PROVIDED DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPING MILITARY SITUATION
BUT REFRAINED FROM FULLY REPORTING THE SOVIET POSITION.
END SUMMARY.

2. USLO HAS OBTAINED THE JANUARY 5, 6 7, 9, 11, 13 AND 14 AND 15 ISSUES OF THE PRC'S RESTRICTED "REFEERNECE NEWS" (TS'AN-KAO HSIAO-HSI) WHICH CLEARLY SLANTED FOREIGN NEWS REPORTS OF THE CAMBODIAN-VIETNAMESE BORDER CONFLICT IN CAMBODIA'S FAVOR. IN CONTRAST TO THE SPARSE COVERAGE OF THE CONFLICT IN THE OFFICIAL MEDIA (THE LATEST MENTION BEING A JANUARY 17 PEOPLE'S DAILY REPLAY OF THE JANUARY 15 STATEMENT BY THE CAMBODIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AFFIRMING CAMBODIAN RIGHTS TO HER TERRITORIAL SEAS AND "EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONES"), "REFERENCE NEWS" PROVIDED IN EPTH COVERAGE OF THE MILITARY SITUATION, THE BREAKING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, FOREIGN REACTIO AND BACKGROUND ANALYSIS. WHILE THE COVERAGE CLEARLY FAVORED THE CAMBODIAN CHARGES "REFERENCE NEWS" DISMISSED THE CHARGES OF BIAS BY EXCERPTING A JANUARY 9 REUTER REPORT FROM PEKING ON THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR'S EXPRESSION OF DISSATISFACTION TO THE PRC MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OVER THE FAILURE OF THE PRC MEDIA TO FULLY REPORT VIETNAM'S POSITION. THE ARTICLE NOTED THAT THE PRC "REJECTS HIS VIEW".

3. THROUGH THE SELECTED USE OF AP, AFP, UPI, REUTERS AND OTHER FOREIGN PRESS REPORTS OF THESE ISSUES "REFERENCE NEWS" ANALYZED FOREIGN REACTIONS TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PEKING 00156 180641Z

CONFLICT INCLUDING POSITIONS TAKEN BY FRANCE, THAILAND, INDIA, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION. EXCERPTS OF REPORTS ON THE SOVIET REACTION NOTED THE SOVIET CHARGE THAT THE PRC IS BIASING ITS PRESS COVERAGE IN FAVOR OF CAMBODIA. THE JANUARY 14 "REFERENCE NEWS" REPLAYED A JANUARY 10 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE; "THE SOVIETS ATTACK BRZEZINSKI'S VIEW OF THE INDOCHINA CONFLICT", WHICH NOTED THE STRONG SOVIET REACTION TO DR. BRZEZINSKI'S COMMENTS ON THE SOVIET/CHINESE INVOLVEMENT DURING THE RECENT "FACE THE NATION" INTERVIEW. IT ALSO REPORTED THE TASS SPOKESMAN'S ACCUSATION THAT THE PRC IS AIDING CAMBODIA POIITICALLY AND MILITARILY. HIGHLIGHTS OF US PRESS COVERAGE INCLUDE A JANUARY 6 WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL "THE NEW INDOCHINA WAR," A JANUARY 7 WASHINGTON POST COLUMN "CAMBODIA: VIETNAM'S VIETNAM," AND A JANUARY 16 NEWSWEEK ITEM.

4. "REFERENCE NEWS" COVERAGE OF OTHER SUBJECTS WILL BE REPORTED IN SEPTEL.

5. COPIES OF THE ABOVE ISSUES BEING POUCHED TO HONG KONG AND THE DEPARTMENT.

WOODCOCK

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